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Testimony of Stacey Zimmerman on behalf of SEIU – CT State Council

**S.B. 304 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR
HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM - SUPPORT**

March 5, 2012

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and the members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council represents over 53,000 active and retired members in Connecticut. SEIU is the states largest union with both public and private sector members.

We stand in support of **S.B. 304 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM**. The history of the Labor Movement is an integral yet often ignored part of the history of the United States; this bill would be a step in addressing the forgotten history of working people and the rise of the middle class.

The irony of this hearing falling on a Monday does wonders to exemplify the need to highlight the plight of working people in this country's history. Monday is the day most of us return to work after the weekend, a small but need respite from the toils of labor, but few know that these 48 hours were fought for by the American Labor Movement.

For a Nation that was founded in a Carpenter's Union Hall, the history that binds all who have had to work for a day's wage is sadly ignored. We forget that the 8 hour day, the minimum wage, safe working conditions and many other protections we take for granted were gained by struggle not handed out by a gracious boss or benign government. Thousands of people from all walks of life paid for these gains by imprisonment, bodily injury and death.

The students of Connecticut deserve to be taught the history of working Americans. Our ancestors may not be the generals and captains of industry they read about in the history books, but that by coming together in the workplace and the community working people can change this Nation.

In conclusion we urge the passage of S.B. 304, so that those that bled and died to make a safer, dignified and democratic workplace and nation be remembered and that the next generation be inspired.